

line. He had given careful attention to this question, and he should deprecate handing over to the Public Prosecutor, or anybody else, the task of deciding what was the straight and narrow line which divided what was punishable, criminal, and obscene within the meaning of the law, and what was merely indelicate and coarse. The public judgment was a safer guide than that of any official, and if the general moral sense of the community did not compel individuals to prosecute, no good would be done by trying to create an artificial moral sense by the action of the Public Prosecutor. . . . Serious evils arose from the failure of attempts to obtain convictions. So far, however, as he could influence the Public Prosecutor, who was, to some extent, independent of any Public Office and acted on his own discretion, he would certainly urge prosecutions in any cases in which it did not appear that more harm than good would result. . . . He was sure, however, that the hon. Member and all those who had honest convictions would not shrink from the slight personal inconvenience of putting the law in motion in any case of real public mischief."

The debate was continued by three or four members, one of whom, Mr. H. J. Wilson (Holmfirth) apologetically and naively declared with respect to the pious circulars on the working of the Contagious Diseases Act, of which Mr. Powell had complained, that their distribution was the only method of making the truth known, and that the only way

to stop them would be to put an end to the
horrible system
that rendered their dissemination necessary.
To this Zola,
if he had been present, might have retorted
that the circulation
of the plain statements of fact contained
in his books
was likewise, in his estimation, the only way to
make known
the degradation of society at large, in order
that remedies
might be applied.

Mr. Smith's motion was carried unanimously,
however,